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#3

MOONSTONE

\$3.50

THE PHANTOM™



Ben Raab
Nick Derington

THE **PHANTOM**

created by LEE FALK

"CURSE OF THE PHANTOM"

PART ONE OF TWO

WRITTEN BY BEN RAAB

ILLUSTRATED BY NICK DERINGTON

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**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT
DR. BRYAN SHEDDEN**

MOONSTONE is...

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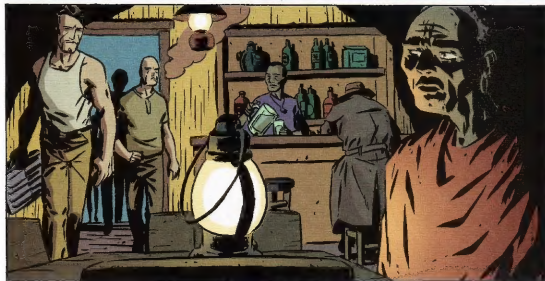
Joe Gentile & Dave Ulanski - publishers

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THE JUNGLES
OF BANGALLA...













KUA'EYASA!
KUA'LAMASA!
KUA! KUA!



WHAT'RE
YOU DOING THAT
FOR?

TO LOOK
UPON THE FACE
OF THE PHANTOM IS
TO SEE DEATH! ONLY
KUA THE UNDOING CAN
DELIVER US FROM
HIS WRATH!



SUPERSTITIOUS
SAVAGE.

BLAM
BLAM



FWAP

OUGHT TO
BE MORE TOLERANT
OF OTHER PEOPLE'S
FAITH, FRIEND.



NEVER KNOW
WHEN THE SPIRIT
MIGHT HIT YOU.

THWAK





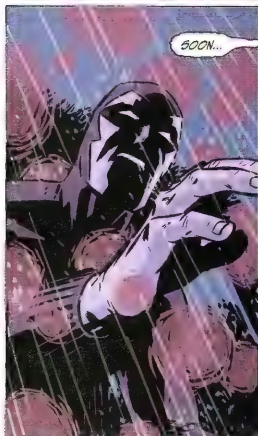
AT LEAST UNTIL
THE PROPER AUTHORITIES
EXTRADITE YOU TO YOUR
RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES FOR
TRACKING NARCOTICS
ACROSS INTERNATIONAL
BORDERS.

YOU'VE
MADE AN ADDICT
OF YOUR LAST
CHILD.

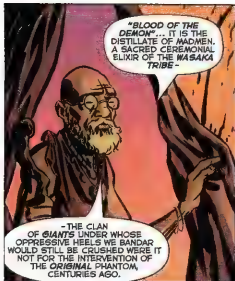
AS FOR YOUR
DEALER...











"BLOOD OF THE DEMON"... IT IS THE DISTILLATE OF MADMEN. A SACRED CEREMONIAL ELIXIR OF THE WASAKA TRIBE -

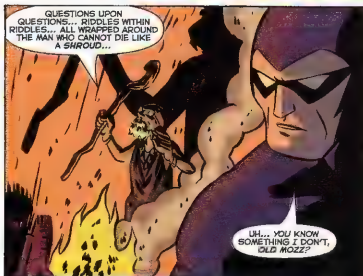
- THE CLAN OF GIANTS UNDER WHOSE OPPRESSIVE HEELS WE BANDAR WOULD STILL BE CRUSHED WERE IT NOT FOR THE INTERVENTION OF THE ORIGINAL PHANTOM, CENTURIES AGO.



I THOUGHT THE WASAKA DISAPPEARED AFTER MY ANCESTOR ASSUMED KUA'S GUISE AND FRIGHTENED THEM INTO LIBERATING YOUR PEOPLE FROM SLAVERY?

SEEMS THEY HAVE RETURNED.

WONDER WHAT BROUGHT THEM BACK? AND WHY ARE THEY SELLING THEIR RITUAL POTIONS FOR PROFIT?



QUESTIONS UPON QUESTIONS... RIDDLES WITHIN RIDDLES... ALL WRAPPED AROUND THE MAN WHO CANNOT DIE LIKE A SHROUD...

UH... YOU KNOW SOMETHING I DON'T, OLD MOZZ?



THE FATE OF THE PHANTOM IS INTERWOVEN WITH THAT OF THE WASAKA BY MORE THAN JUST THE STRANDS OF YOUR RAIMENT.



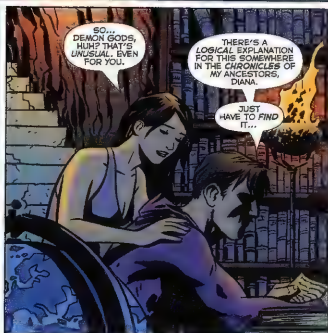
BE MINDFUL OF THE PAST, KIT WALKER, FOR IT WILL SHAPE YOUR FUTURE.

THANKS FOR THE ADVICE... I THINK...



YOU COULD HAVE TOLD HIM OF THE CURSE, YOU BLEATING, OLD GOAT.

IT CHANGES NOTHING, CHIEFTAIN. IF KUA THE UNDYING HAS REVEALED HIMSELF THIS NIGHT -





"CHRONICLE OF
THE 4TH PHANTOM...
JAPAN, 1624..."

"...THE YEAR BEFORE
I ASSUMED FATHER'S MANTLE,
AND SPORE OUR FAMILY'S SACRED
OATH - TO FIGHT PIRACY, GREED,
CRUELTY AND INJUSTICE - I FOUND
MYSELF IN THE LAND OF THE
RISING SUN..."

Just two decades after Tokugawa
Ieyasu had assumed power and established
his shogunate, there was already trouble
in this newly unified kingdom.

A rival family, the
Clan Kurosawa, sought
to usurp the bakufu by
any means necessary.



Like my father and his
father before him, I had
left Bangalla to expand my
knowledge of the world that
it might help me better serve
as the next Phantom.

Having proven the Shogun's
worthy and loyal servant, I was
made one of the Chief Imperial
Retainers... Tokugawa Iemitsu's
personal bodyguards.



An honor never before bestowed
upon a gaijin... A foreigner...

I cherished this duty
with all my heart and soul.



Though, not everyone in
the royal court shared
my enthusiasm...



A few months into the campaign against the rebels, the Shogun's spies uncovered a Kurosame plot to raid one of the arsenals at Edo.

That night, at dinner, we gathered to strategize a pre-emptive strike...



...And fell prey to sabotage from within.

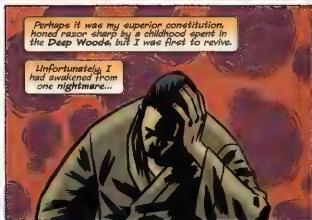


We lay unconscious... helpless... vulnerable...



Perhaps it was my superior constitution, honed razor sharp by a childhood spent in the Deep Woods, but I was first to revive.

Unfortunately, I had awakened from one nightmare...



... Only to discover another.





I had to
act swiftly.



Not only was my honor
at stake, but so was the
Shogun's. And with him...



... The future
of all Japan.



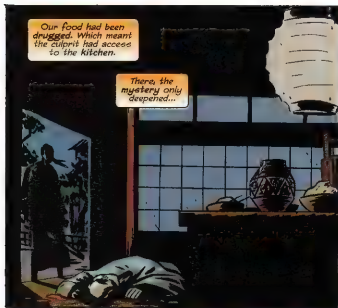
With Iemitsu
finally safe...



... I set off to find
the saboteur.

Our food had been drugged. Which meant the culprit had access to the kitchen.

There, the mystery only deepened...



The craftsmanship of the container that held the poison was unmistakable. It was from Bangalla.



Tajuro, the ambitious samurai who resented my presence most, seized this opportunity to accuse me of treachery against Lord Tokugawa.



A crime punishable by death for which I had no ready means of proving my innocence.



But the Shogun owed me his life that night.

With a heavy heart, he stripped me of my title and banished me from Japan... forever...

Tajuro could not have acted alone. Someone with knowledge of my native land had conspired with him. Someone with an even greater vendetta against me...

...But who?





INTERESTING STORY. BUT WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU TONIGHT?

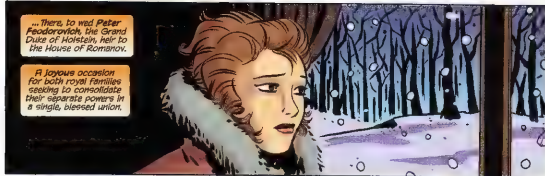
I BELIEVE SOMARA WAS USED TO DRUG THE SAMURAI.

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

BECAUSE THE CHRONICLES TELL ME SO. HERE, IN THE ANNALS OF THE 10TH PHANTOM...



"GERMANY, 1744... PRINCESS SOPHIA AUGUSTA FREDERIKA JOURNEYS EAST, AGAINST THE WIND AND DRIVING SNOW, TO THE ICY PLAINS OF RUSSIA..."



...There, to wed Peter Feodorovich, the Grand Duke of Holstein, heir to the House of Romanov.

A joyous occasion for both royal families seeking to consolidate their separate powers in a single, blessed union.

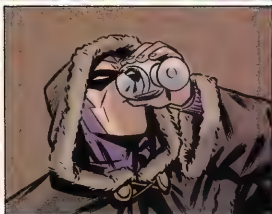


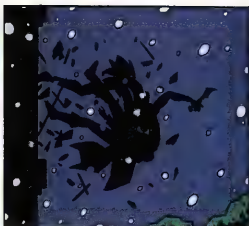
As a personal favor to her parents, the King and Queen, I have gladly undertaken the charge of escorting Sophia to MOSCOW.

I've known her since she was a babe. She's like the little sister I never had.



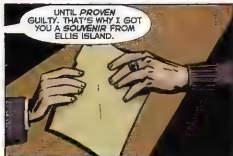
Thus far, our travels have been WITHOUT incident. Fates willing, they will remain so...





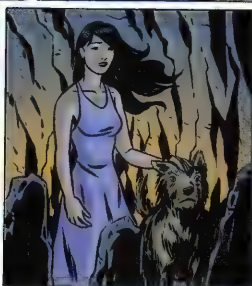


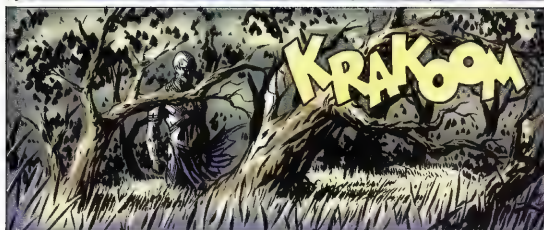












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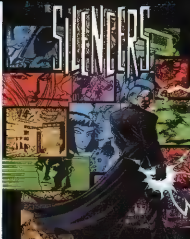
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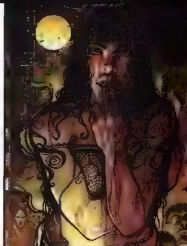


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"FORGET THE SOPRANOS, GIVE ME THE SILENCERS!"

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— COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE

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— KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE

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— BROKEN FRONTIER

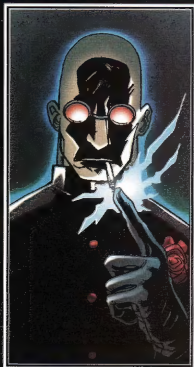
"A MUST READ BOOK!"

To quote CARDINAL to anyone who thinks they're too good for *The Silencers*:
"I OUGHTA HAVE YOU WHACKED."

— COMIX VIEW

THE SILENCERS

by Fred Van Lente & Steve Ellis



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A dark secret possesses him like a demon...
A squalid life of crime and violence...
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lead that it's shot with.



Chances are, he was no friend of yours.

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